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The purpose of this review is to indicate the need for longtitudinal research to evaluate the significance of aspirations in predicting occupational attainment. Data for this study were collected from a longitudinal study of 152 males and females interviewed as high school seniors in 1948 and re-interviewed in 1956. The analysis of data suggests that occupational aspirations are not good predictors of the type of occupation attained. Among the 66 males in the sample, approximately 35 percent were employed in the occupational category which they preferred as high school seniors. Of the 86 females, only 15 percent attained their occupational goals. Data were analyzed to determine the relationship between various social and personal characteristics of the respondents and the degree of congruency between occupational aspirations and attainments. No differences existed for either males or females between occupational congruency and (1) farm or nonfarm residential background, (2) socioeconomic status of the parents at the time the respondent graduated, (3) educational background of the respondents' fathers and mothers, (4) frequency of discussion of future plans with parents, (5) discussion with persons other than parents concerning future occupations, and (6) being employed at a job while in high school. (CH)

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CONGRUENCY BETWEEN OCCUPATIONAL ASPIRATIONS AND ATTAINMENTS OF IOWA YOUNG PEOPLE[1]

To The Editor:

Much sociological research has been conducted in recent years concerning the occupational aspirations of youth, and there has been a continual increase in the volume of data published. Most researchers have been concerned with the occupational aspirations of high school students, but few have analyzed their actual attainments even though the studies were based on the assumption that these aspirations are important determinants of subsequent adult attainment.[2]

A few studies have been concerned with occupational aspirations and attainments of rural young adults, and most of these were prior to the past decade or two. Three studies completed approximately 25 years ago have several serious limitations.[3] An analysis by Porter in 1954 covers a span of only six months,[4] which makes it difficult to substantiate any concrete relationship between aspirations and achievement.

Four more recent studies provide additional insights on this subject. Using longitudinal data in 1958, Haller obtained a correlation of $r = +.46$ between level of occupational aspiration and that of occupational achievement,[5] and Sewell, Haller, and Portes in another longitudinal study in 1967 obtained a correlation of $r = +.43$.[6]

Kuvlesky reported data that are more relevant to our study.[7] He found

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[2] A. O. Haller, "Occupational Choices of Rural Youth," *Journal of Cooperative Extension*, 4 (Summer, 1966), pp. 93–102; and Lee G. Burchinal (with Archibald O. Haller and Marvin J. Taves), *Career Choices of Rural Youth in a Changing Society*, St. Paul: Minnesota Agr. Exp. Sta., Bull. 458, 1962.

[3] William M. Proctor, "A 13 Year Follow-up of High School Pupils," *Occupations*, 15 (January, 1937); Edward Humphrey Worthington, *Vocational and Educational Choices of High School Pupils*, Philadelphia: University Press, 1938; and C. S. Anderson, *Young Men Ten Years After Leaving Pennsylvania Rural High Schools*, University Park: Pennsylvania Agr. Exp. Sta., Bull. 468, September, 1944.

[4] R. J. Porter, "Predicting Vocational Plans of High School Senior Boys," *Personnel and Guidance Journal*, 33 (December, 1954), pp. 215–218.

[5] Archibald O. Haller, "Research Problems on the Occupational Achievement of Farm-Reared People," *Rural Sociology*, 23 (December, 1958), pp. 355–362.

[6] William H. Sewell, Archibald O. Haller, and Alejandro Portes, "Educational and Occupational Achievements of Wisconsin Farm Boys," Paper presented at joint session of Rural Sociological Society and American Sociological Association, San Francisco, August, 1967.

[7] William P. Kuvlesky, "The Non-Attainment of Adolescents' Occupational Aspirations: A Longitudinal Study of Rural Pennsylvania Males," Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University Park: Pennsylvania State University, 1965; William P. Kuvlesky and Robert C. Bealer, "The Relevance of Adolescents' Occupational Aspirations for Subsequent Job Attainment," *Rural Sociology*, 32 (September, 1967), pp. 290–301.

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that the most frequently desired goal was a professional occupation, followed closely by farming and skilled work. After ten years, only 23 percent of the young men had attained the occupational goals expressed as sophomores, but the number varied within the categories. With a word of caution, he indicated that aspirations of rural youth did not seem to be a good predictive device for long-range occupational attainments.[8] Kuvlesky and Bealer attempted in 1966 to clarify the concept of occupational choice by designating *aspiration* as a person's orientation toward a goal, and *expectation* as the occupational position an individual expects to achieve.[9]

Kohout and Rothney, reporting the results of a longitudinal study of 321 Wisconsin high school senior boys, found that 14 percent of their respondents were employed in the occupational category specified ten years earlier.[10] They found the highest relationship to exist for those employed in agricultural and professional occupational categories.

This review is presented to indicate the need for research of a longitudinal nature to evaluate the significance of aspirations in predicting attainments. This paper presents longitudinal data that may provide additional insights into the relationship of occupational aspirations to attainments. We are concerned with (1) the occupational aspirations expressed by a sample of high school seniors in 1948 compared with their occupational attainments by 1956, and (2) the relationship between social and personal characteristics of individuals and the congruency of their occupational attainments with their aspirations.

METHOD AND PROCEDURES

Benchmark data were gathered in 1948 from all graduating senior males and females from the eight rural high schools in Hamilton County, Iowa, and the high school in the adjoining Story County community of Story City.[11] Story City is similar to Hamilton County in regard to ethnic and other cultural factors and was selected to increase the number of cases in the sample.

The high schools studied were located in a basically rural area of the north central grain region of Iowa[12] in towns of from 100 to 1800 residents.[13]

[8] William P. Kuvlesky, "Occupational Aspirations and Expectations of Rural Youth: Some Suggestions for Action Programs," Paper presented at the Association of Southern Agricultural Workers' meeting, Jackson, Mississippi, February, 1966, p. 6.

[9] William P. Kuvlesky and Robert C. Bealer, "A Clarification of the Concept 'Occupational Choice,'" *Rural Sociology,* 31 (September, 1966), pp. 265–276.

[10] Vernon A. Kohout and John W. M. Rothney, "Longitudinal Study of Consistency of Vocational Preferences," *American Educational Research Journal,* 1 (January, 1964), pp. 10–21.

[11] For a discussion of the 1948 data see Joe M. Bohlen, "Factors Related to Migration Intentions of High School Seniors, Hamilton County, Iowa, 1948," Unpublished M.S. thesis, Ames: Iowa State University, 1948. For the 1956 study see Spencer H. Hildahl, "A Longitudinal Analysis of Migration of Young Adults, Hamilton County, Iowa," Unpublished M.S. thesis, Ames: Iowa State University, 1961.

[12] Paul J. Jehlik and Ray E. Wakeley, *Rural Organization in Process: A Case Study of Hamilton County, Iowa,* Ames: Iowa Agr. Exp. Sta., Res. Bull. 365, 1949.

[13] Webster City was eliminated because the school was in an urban center and additional urban centers would have been required to increase the size of sample.

Table 1. Percentage distribution of occupational aspirations in 1948 and occupation attained in 1956 for male respondents

Occupational category	Aspirations 1948			Attainments 1956		
	Farm (39)	Nonfarm (27)	Total (66)	Farm (39)	Nonfarm (27)	Total (66)
Professional	15	41	26	5	22	12
Farmer	59	0	35	62	0	36
Manager	0	0	0	3	7	5
Sales	0	0	0	3	11	6
Craftsmen	8	22	14	8	26	15
Operative	3	0	1	3	7	5
Laborer	0	4	1	3	0	2
Not in labor force	0	0	0	10	22	15
No data	15	33	23	3	4	3
Total	100	100	100	100	99	99

A total of 157 high school seniors were interviewed just prior to graduation.

The follow-up research was conducted in the spring of 1956, eight years later, to allow respondents to complete their education, military service, or both, and to become established in the occupational world. All but five of the original sample were included in the follow-up study.[14]

The data were gathered by personal interview whenever possible, (87 percent) with a mailed questionnaire used for the remaining 13 percent. The interview schedule was only slightly modified for clarity. Statistical tests indicated no significant difference in responses from mailed schedules and personal interviews.

The concept *congruency* refers to the agreement between the type of occupation aspired to in 1948 and the type of occupation in which the respondent was employed in 1956. *Incongruency* refers to the disagreement between aspirations and attainments. The operational procedure used to determine whether a respondent was congruent or incongruent was a cross-classification of the type of occupation aspired to in 1948 and the type of job held in 1956. The concept sums up the predictive relationship between aspirations and attainment.

RESULTS

Occupational Aspirations

In this study we were concerned with aspirations and not expectations. In analyzing the 1948 occupational aspirations of the respondents by sex and their farm–nonfarm residential background, we found that the respondents, with the exception of farm males, aspired more frequently to occupations in the professional occupational category[15] than to those in any other category. See Tables 1 and 2. Over 38 percent of the entire sample aspired to pro-

[14] Two persons were deceased and three were otherwise unavailable.

[15] Occupations were classified into the Census classification of occupations (commonly known as the Edward's Scale).

Table 2. Percentage distribution of occupational aspirations in 1948 and occupations attained in 1956 for female respondents

Occupational category	Aspirations 1948			Attainments 1956		
	Farm (51)	Nonfarm (35)	Total (86)	Farm (51)	Nonfarm (35)	Total (86)
Professional	49	46	48	10	11	11
Clerical	35	29	33	18	20	19
Sales	0	0	0	2	3	2
Service worker	4	11	7	2	0	1
Housewife	6	0	3	67	63	65
Student	0	0	0	2	3	2
No data	6	14	9			
Total	100	100	100	101	100	100

fessional occupations: 26 percent of the males and nearly 50 percent of the females wanted to obtain jobs in this category.

Among farm males, nearly 60 percent aspired to farming as an occupation, approximately 15 percent aspired to professional and 8 percent to craftsmen occupations, respectively, and 15 percent indicated no occupational preference. For the nonfarm males, approximately 41 percent aspired to professional occupations, 22 percent to craftsmen, and 4 percent to laboring. No nonfarm males aspired to farming, but 33 percent were undecided concerning a desired occupation. The males, as compared with the females, had the largest percentage of indecision concerning their future occupations.

Among females, clerical occupations were most frequently preferred (33 percent) after those in the professional category. Approximately 10 percent did not indicate occupational plans.

We observed that the proportion of 1948 high school graduates aspiring to professional occupations was more than six times greater than the proportion of their fathers holding professional positions (only 3 percent of the fathers of males and 8 percent of the fathers of females).

Occupational Attainments

A comparison of the 1948 aspirations with the occupations achieved by the male respondents in 1956 shows that approximately the same proportion aspired to farming as were farming, and nearly the same proportion of males were employed as craftsmen as had wanted to be craftsmen (Table 1). The only category showing a large degree of inconsistency between aspirations and attainments was the professional category, where more than twice as many males had aspired to these occupations as were able to achieve them. Those who did not were distributed throughout the range of available occupations.

Among the females, a much different situation existed (Table 2). Because nearly two-thirds of the females were not employed, we found a much greater inconsistency between aspirations and attainments. Nearly five times fewer females were employed in professional occupations than had aspired to them, and one-half the number of females were employed at clerical oc-

Table 3. Cross-classification of 1948 occupational aspirations and 1956 occupational attainments of a sample of rural Iowa males

1948 occupational aspirations	1956 occupational attainments								
	Profes-sional	Other white-collar	Farmer	Crafts-men	Other blue-collar	Stu-dent	Mili-tary	No data	Total
Professional	4	2	1	2	1	3	3	1	17
Farmer		1	16	2	2		1	1	23
Craftsmen	1	2	2	3	1				9
Operative			1						1
Laborer				1					1
Undecided	3	2	4	2	1	3			15
Total	8	7	24	10	5	6	4	2	66

cupations than had planned to be. Obviously marriage was an intervening variable in limiting the number of females pursuing any type of occupation. The data also substantiate that many females viewed their entrance into the labor force as temporary.

Table 3 shows the cross-classification between the 1948 occupational aspirations and the 1956 occupational attainments of the males. The data indicate that 35 percent of the males were employed in the occupation they aspired to while seniors. The greatest congruency between aspirations and attainments was found among those who planned to farm and were farming.

To analyze the factors that affect the congruency between occupational aspirations and attainments, we used three categories of variables: (1) the social situations in which the respondents found themselves, (2) the reference groups to which they were oriented, and (3) the characteristics of the respondents. These factors have generally been found to be related to the occupational choices of rural youth.[16]

One factor of the social situation analyzed was the residential background of the respondents in 1948. A chi-square test revealed no significant relationship between farm or nonfarm residence and congruency of aspirations and attainments for either males or females. When both were combined and a chi-square performed between residence and degree of congruency, we found a significant difference. Those with a farm background had the greatest degree of congruency.

Another factor of the social situation was the socioeconomic status of the parents in 1948. Using Sewell's level of living scale,[17] we obtained no statistically significant differences between high or low socioeconomic scores and congruency. Those of high status seemed to be more congruent than those who had lower socioeconomic status, but the .05 level of significance was not reached.

A third factor of the social situation yielded similar results. A chi-square

[16] Burchinal *et al., op. cit.,* pp. 16–18.

[17] William H. Sewell, "A Short Form of the Farm Family Socio-Economic Status Scale," *Rural Sociology,* 8 (June, 1943), pp. 167–169.

test indicated no significant differences between the educational background of the mothers and fathers and occupational congruency. The social situation of the respondents, as defined by the variables used, showed little relationship to the respondents' congruency between the occupations achieved and the occupations aspired to as high school seniors.

Three variables were used in analyzing the sources of information the respondents sought for advice concerning future plans and work experiences: (1) the frequency of discussion of future plans with parents, (2) discussion with persons other than parents, and (3) working at jobs while in high school. When separate chi-square tests were performed between each of these three variables and the occupational congruency of the respondents, no significant relationships were found.

The third set of factors found in past studies to be related to occupational choice were the personal characteristics of the respondents. In regard to the relationship of sex to the congruency of occupational choice, we found a statistically significant relationship at the .001 level. As might be expected, the males were much more congruent in obtaining the occupational goals than were the females.

Whether or not the females were married had a great effect on congruency. A statistically significant relationship at the .001 level was found between marriage and the incongruency of attaining occupational aspirations for the females. Among the males, no significant relationship was found between congruency and marriage.

Another characteristic hypothesized to be related to congruency was whether or not the respondent had additional training beyond high school. A statistically significant relationship at the .05 level was found between occupational congruency and additional training for males, but not for females. The findings for the males were contrary to our expectations because those males who were congruent did not have additional training. This relationship can be explained by the fact that the largest amount of congruency was found among those males who planned to farm, and only two of these males actually obtained additional training beyond high school.

CONCLUSIONS

Our analysis of data from this sample of 152 rural Iowa young people suggests that occupational aspirations are not good predictors of the type of occupation attained. Among the 66 males in the sample, approximately 35 percent were employed in the occupational category they preferred as high school seniors, but of the 86 females only 15 percent attained their occupational goals. Eight of the 14 single females in 1956 had attained their occupational goals.

Data for the males provide more support for the relationship between occupational aspirations and attainment than was indicated in the studies by Kuvlesky or by Kohout and Rothney, but it is difficult to compare these data with those of Haller or of Sewell *et al.* We found no previous research to which the female data can be compared.

By extending the length of time in which attainment is measured, one might produce an increase of the relationship. Also, it is possible that more sensitive and efficient measures might be developed that could increase the

relationship between aspirations and attainments. These measures must include an indicator of the attachment the individual has toward achieving his occupational goal.

Our findings indicate that certain occupations have more predictive power than others. Interpretation is difficult with such a small sample, but those aspiring to farm have the greatest congruency, followed by craftsmen and professionals. These findings are more consistent with those of Kohout and Rothney, who indicated that respondents aspiring to farming and professions had the highest rates of congruency. Kuvlesky, on the other hand, found that those aspiring to unskilled jobs had the highest rate of congruency. Our sample appears to be very homogeneous, which fact may account for the large proportion of the males aspiring to professional and farmer occupations.

Data were analyzed to determine the relationship between various social and personal characteristics of the respondents and the degree of congruency between occupational aspirations and attainments. No differences existed for either males or females between occupational congruency and (1) farm or nonfarm residential background; (2) socioeconomic status of the parents at the time the respondent graduated; (3) educational background of the respondents' fathers and mothers; (4) frequency of discussion of future plans with parents; (5) discussion with persons other than parents concerning future occupations; and (6) being employed at a job while in high school. A significant relationship did exist between congruency and training beyond high school for the males, but not for the females. Contrary to our expectations, additional training was associated with incongruency.

Further research based on a more heterogeneous sample may provide different results than we found. Our entire sample came from a rural area and had quite homogeneous characteristics.

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